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appointed in 1843 magistrate of Rodriguez, the population consists of about 250 souls, one-fifth only being females! As might be expected, a sad state of immorality prevails from this last deficiency. It is a common thing for a woman to have 4 or 5 husbands; the children are brought up together—the husband for the time being acting as father. The race from which the natives have sprung is African and Madagascan. They are intensely black and ugly—with all the worst features of the lowest class of negro. The original founders of the colony were slaves from the Mauritius.

They are very lazy and often on the point of starvation, though nature so bountifully provides for them. They are fond of dress, and of ardent spirits, which they receive from the whalers in return for their poultry.

The great number of vessels during the last years wrecked on the southern reefs, which *run out several miles farther than marked on the charts*, has induced the Governor of Mauritius to introduce 6 Creole policemen, with a code of regulations, but without boats, ropes, guns, or rockets, wherewith to assist vessels in distress. British goods cannot be introduced except after having paid the heavy customs-dues of the Mauritius, for which no drawback is allowed. The chief magistrate has no power summarily to dispose of misdemeanors and offences, but is required to hear and collect all evidence, and to send the accused and his accusers to the Mauritius.

IV.—*Notes on the Island of Cocos, and two of the Galapagos.*

By Rear-Admiral Sir GEORGE SEYMOUR, K.C.B. (Communicated by the Admiralty.)

[Read November 13, 1848.]

THE Island of Quibo is about the same size as the Isle of Wight. Off the points ledges of rock generally extend; but there is an appearance of an anchoring-place in the intervening bays on the E. side, along which I proceeded in the 'Sampson' steam-vessel. The soil on the coast is good, but the interior is nearly inaccessible from the steepness of the cliffs and the tangled vegetation. We found traces of pearl-divers having visited the shores; but there were no inhabitants, except at the small islet of Ranchirea, between which and the N.E. end of Quibo there is good anchorage. A Frenchman of the name of Sorget is resident on Ranchirea; and this situation, as far as I could judge on a cursory view, seems more favourable for an establishment than any we saw on the larger island.

The 'Sampson' watered in the same place at which Commodore Anson completed his stock in 1746.

Quibo is luxuriantly wooded, and would be fruitful in every tropical production, but for the rains, which continue from April till November, and which it is likely, in its uncleared state, must tend to render it unhealthy.

It is subject to calms and variable winds, especially in the rainy season; and therefore not well adapted as a port of general rendezvous, although it may acquire more or less importance whenever a transit by either of the adjoining provinces shall be effected from the Atlantic.

We found the island of Cocos completely shrouded in heavy rain. The N.E. bay, in which the 'Sampson' was anchored in 20 fathoms, affords shelter from the prevailing swell, but is open to the N.E. We also visited the N.W. bay, where the landing was difficult from the swell which always rolls in there.

Vancouver's description of this picturesque little island is drawn with his usual accuracy. It is happily placed so as to supply ships, the voyages of which are prolonged by the variable winds that prevail in this quarter, with water and wood in abundance, and also with an ample supply of fish; but it does not possess either extensive or secure harbours.*

From thence we proceeded to Chatham Island in the Galapagos, and examined Stephen's Bay, Wreck Bay, near the S.W. end, and the watering-place called Fresh-water Bay, on the S. side. The 'Beagle' and 'Daphne' here completed their water in 1832 and 1845; but from the swell that sets on the shore, if large ships frequented these islands, I think it would be necessary to bring water to them in a tank-vessel, and to some sheltered anchorage, instead of leaving them exposed to the difficulty of getting under weigh from this place, where they must lie close to the shore, and on the weather side of the island.

Wreck Bay is inhabited by a native of Guayaquil, called here General Mena, and a person of the name of Gurney, who calls himself an Englishman. They maintain themselves by supplying the American whalers with terrapin; and having exhausted the shores of these animals, they now seek them in the interior, which they describe to be generally much more fertile than near the coast, and to contain many water springs. They have put into cultivation some acres about seven miles

* Cocos or Kulling's Islands are a small group lying in the parallel of 14° S., and meridian of 93° E., and were formerly occupied by a Mr. Ross and family. Prior to this they were uninhabited. The climate is mild and healthy, the thermometer scarcely rising above 84° or falling below 75°.—*Vide* Commander Kempthorne, I.N. in 'Bombay Geographical Journal,' 1848, p. 210. — Ed.

from Wreck Bay, which is more sheltered and has a better beach than the other anchorages.

The French brig-of-war 'La Genie,' in August last, dug a well through clay, the lava being only superficial, but it was too near the beach, and the water in it, and in the ponds described by Captain Kellet, I found to be quite salt.

Having examined Post-Office Bay, in Charles Island, we next anchored in Black Beach Road, whence there is a path to the settlement, at which there is a well about a mile and a half from the sea, and five miles farther the spring called the Deep-stone, beyond the cultivated land so well described by Captain Fitzroy, which I visited with Captain Henderson.

The number of settlers is now reduced to about twenty-five, as the greater number have left the island, their chief occupation of supplying the whaling-ships having ceased with the exhaustion of terrapin in this island. On the lately cultivated farms every kind of tropical production* was growing in abundance; and the adjoining lands, which had not been cleared, appeared to be of the same character, and to be available for increased means of subsistence if the island were peopled.

It is stated in an account of a voyage in an English whaling-ship, published by Dr. Coulter, that he found coal in the hills in the interior of Chatham Island. The residents, who have gone over it, are not aware of its existence; but the assertion furnishes an additional reason for a thorough examination of the island.

Volcanic action in this group of islands is so generally marked, and there is so much lava on the shores, that the first appearance is discouraging; but the result of my short personal examination has been to give me a better idea of their resources, if in the hands of those who would apply industry and exertion to their improvement.

The climate is healthy and the heat moderate, considering the vicinity of the islands to the equator.

V.—*Observations on Coal in the N.E. part of the Island of Formosa.* By Lieut. GORDON, of H. M. brig *Royalist*. Communicated by the Admiralty.

[Read June 26, 1848.]

THE coal in the N.E. part of Formosa appears to extend in a direction east and west, and I have traced it through a succes-

* See further on the Galapagos Islands, 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,' vol. vi. p. 332; and on the plants and vegetation of the Galapagos Archipelago, refer to two papers by Dr. J. D. Hooker, in the 'Linnean Transactions,' vol. xx. pp. 163, 235.—ED.